

Congressmen Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., today worked to amend the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill to include more funding for Africa, but the measure was rejected. Jackson first tried, unsuccessfully, to get consideration from the committee that sets the rules for consideration of House legislation. He then took the fight to the House floor.

After the Republican-led House refused to take up the amendment, Congressman Jackson released the following statement:

"Africa is in a state of emergency, and the commitment to addressing that emergency is woefully inadequate. Development assistance to Africa was cut from last year's levels. I proposed restoring that funding, using a comprehensive approach that offered healing and hope while respecting African self-determination. Obviously the House leadership was more comfortable doing much less. It was like giving a small bandage to a person with a broken leg.

"The majority of the world's poorest nation's are in Africa. One in three people in sub-Saharan Africa does not get enough to eat every day, and only half of them have access to clean drinking water. One in three children completes elementary school, and the average life expectancy is just 49 years. In nations hardest hit by HIV/AIDS you can cut the life expectancy by 19 years. Yes, we must address AIDS in Africa, but it does not exist in a vacuum. Improved overall health care, education, trade and debt relief would go a long way toward helping Africans help themselves.

"One of the worst things about this bill is that it started out almost \$2 billion lower than even the President's request. He wanted \$18.8 billion. The House leadership set the bill at \$17.1 billion. We were forced from the outset to rob Peter to pay Paul. Every legislator knows there are times when you make tough choices because of tight dollars. That's not the whole story here. As things have been so often with the Bush Administration and the Republican-led Congress, it's not that we can't afford to allocate the resources. They choose not to. They chose tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy. They chose to fund an unrealistic ballistic missile defense system. Now for Africa, they have obviously chosen to ignore the type of rampant poverty, illness and hopelessness that create a breeding ground for terrorism.

"There are more than 600 million people in the 48 nations of sub-Saharan Africa. They deserve a comprehensive commitment from the United States—a Road Map. Africa's safe and

successful future is critical to ultimately ensure our own safe and successful future."